

GIRLS YOU CAN HIT

WHY DO FASCISTS WANT TO KILL TRANS WOMEN?

In a nine-day period between June 25 and July 3, six Black trans women – Brayla Stone, Merci Mack, Shaki Peters, Draya McCarty, and Tatiana Hall – were found murdered. The news barely made a ripple; Black trans women and trans women of color are murdered regularly – and no one is shocked, because the gender class structure is operating as usual. Liberal-individualist analysis claims that this is simply the result of amorphous personal "prejudices" -- that individual men, fearful of the unknown or afraid of change, attack trans women for personal reasons.

This is both idealist and ahistorical, a comforting fantasy that naturalizes and atomizes the oppression of trans women as a class and protects the underlying gender class structure of the empire.

In fact, reactionaries make trans women a primary target. ICE imprisons trans women in special separate concentration camps under even worse conditions than cis-gender men and women, and during protests, police subject captured trans women for especially brutal treatment. On July 25, a group of pro-police protesters outside Pittsburgh switched their chant from "all lives matter" to "kill transgenders" and "kill faggots." State power and reactionary elements target trans women specifically – but why? Because the oppression of trans women as a class is critical to the gender class structure of the empire, and by centering the oppression of trans women in our material feminist analysis, we can understand that class structure much more clearly.

WHAT IS THE GENDER CLASS STRUCTURE OF THE EMPIRE?

Fundamentally, the gender class structure is built on the domination of white men over women; white women constitute a subordinated but privileged class under the control ("protection") of white men, and reactionary white manhood is ultimately defined in terms of control of women.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TRANS WOMEN (AND NONBINARY TRANSFEMININE PEOPLE, WHO ARE TREATED LIKE TRANS WOMEN) IN THIS GENDER CLASS STRUCTURE?

Trans women, nonbinary transfeminine people, and feminine gay cisgender men are treated as a gender underclass. Structurally, they are "girls you can hit." They are also subject to substantial sexual violence in the form of sexual assault and rape. Cisgender women from oppressed and colonized nations are treated more like "girls you can hit" if

they are less acceptable as potential members of the "protected" class of potential wives and mothers.

Thus, Black and Indigenous women are treated disposably as "girls you can hit." Likewise, sex workers, who are seen as disqualified from the "protected" class of women, are "girls you can hit." The further they are from the "protected" class of women, the more disposable they are, and they are treated more and more like trans women. This develops intersectionally as well; Black trans women are often accused of sex work to justify violent treatment, and Black trans women sex workers are murdered casually.

WHY DO CISGENDER MEN OPPRESS TRANS WOMEN? IN OTHER WORDS, HOW DO CISGENDER MEN BENEFIT MATERIALLY FROM OPPRESSING TRANS WOMEN?

This dynamic arises in childhood, where they are an acceptable target for violence and covert sex ("practice girls") by boys trying to enact their manhood. Men can gain status and an identity as controllers of women by hurting "girls you can hit." They "protect" (white, cis) women in the same way that the police "protect" communities: by enacting violence on the underclass, they gain control over the "respectable" class of women.

The threat to the women they control is supposed to be implicit, not enacted: "Serve me faithfully and you will never be hurt the way I hurt those sissies in middle school." But the opposite side of the coin is that any "protected" woman who refuses to comply in a serious and sustained way can be threatened with degradation to the underclass.

WHY DO CISGENDER WOMEN OPPRESS TRANS WOMEN? IN OTHER WORDS, HOW DO CISGENDER WOMEN BENEFIT MATERIALLY FROM OPPRESSING TRANS WOMEN?

They get to not be treated like trans women, sex workers, and other "girls you can hit." Their respectable status is contingent on having an underclass they are not part of.

HOW DOES THE OPPRESSION OF TRANS MEN (AND NONBINARY TRANSMASCULINE PEOPLE, WHO ARE TREATED LIKE TRANS MEN) FIT INTO THIS GENDER CLASS STRUCTURE?

The greatest threat to a trans woman's life is being treated like a trans woman. For trans men and nonbinary transmasculine people, the greatest threat to their lives is being treated like a cis woman. We can see this play out in fascist fantasies of "correcting" trans men to become cis women, and in the way that transmisogynists like JK

Rowling claim that "trans activists [code for trans women] are seducing your daughters into mutilating their healthy, fertile female bodies in an impossible attempt to become men." In fascist and reactionary rhetoric, trans men are framed as deluded, innocent cis women who have to be saved from a horrible error. In the material world, this agenda often plays out in the form of corrective rape and other atrocities.

Trans men from colonized communities are treated much more violently, as in the case of the murdered Tony McDade; there is no prospect of forcing them to be "protected" women, so they are treated disposably, like trans women.

HOW DOES TRANS WOMEN'S LIBERATION THREATEN THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE EMPIRE? IN OTHER WORDS, WHY DO REACTIONARIES WANT TO WIPE OUT TRANS WOMEN?

The reactionaries are not mistaken to see the liberation of trans women (and sex workers) as linked to the liberation of cis women from colonized communities, nor is their targeting of trans women a mistake.

The liberation of trans women and "girls you can hit" in general would invert the gendered class structure of the empire and strike a critical blow to the control of "protected" women that reactionary men depend on for both social reproduction, personal exercise of power, and identity formation.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR US?

We must center the liberation of trans women, sex workers, and other "girls you can hit." This will immediately help to liberate cis women from colonized nations, remove the hierarchical power of "protected" white cis women over other women, degrade the power of white cisgender men over oppressed genders, and remove the basis for treating trans men and transmasculine people as deluded cis women.